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Annie Koutrakis calls for Wellington St. to be closed permanently, following 'Freedom Convoy' crisis

The Laval News Exclusive

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Photo: Newsfirst Multimedia



Tina Garabedian at the Beijing Winter Olympics

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RCMP's "Name the Puppy" contest

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Street security near Parliament should be drastically increased, says Annie Koutrakis

Vimy MP calls for Wellington St. to be closed permanently, following 'Freedom Convoy' crisis



MARTIN C. BARRY
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For The Laval News
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During an anticipated Parliamentary investigation into the "Freedom Convoy" which occupied Parliament Hill for more than three weeks, Vimy Liberal MP Annie Koutrakis says she will be recommending that Ottawa's Wellington Street be closed off permanently in front of the Parliament buildings to reinforce the safety of the country's government and MPs.

'Shut Wellington'

"I would like to see Wellington shut down to the public, to be honest with you," Koutrakis said in an interview with The Laval News earlier this week, as a consortium of police forces from several provinces were removing the last of the protesters and their trucks from a grid of streets occupied in central Ottawa by the Freedom Convoy since late January.

"Whether that becomes a pedestrian walk, whether that means there's going to be checkpoints from a certain spot – I was thinking maybe from Elgin Street all the way down to Bank Street – we need to secure that area," she

said.

"Could you imagine this happening on Pennsylvania Avenue around the Capitol in Washington D.C.?" added Koutrakis, alluding to the events there on January 6 last year when Trump supporters stormed the seat of elected government in the U.S.

MPs needed protection

Although Koutrakis herself was working from home in Montreal during the time the siege of Ottawa's downtown area was underway, she said many other parliamentarians who were in the nation's capital over the past few weeks had to be escorted by special security through the chaos along Wellington St. in order to be able to take their seats in the House of Commons.

Koutrakis said MPs who planned to enter the Parliament buildings were advised to not wear their identifying parliamentary member's lapel pin. She said they were also told not to wear protective face masks while passing through the crowds, since protesters were reported to have threatened people with face masks on. She said she respects the rights to free speech and to demonstrate publicly, but added that she is not happy about illegal aspects of the occupation.

Investigation coming

"This turned out to be something very different," she said. "There will be an investigation. And I am confident that once the investigation is over, we as Canadians are going to be very surprised and disappointed to see what factions were at play. I'm disappointed to see how, as Canadians, we could be so divided. I'm disappointed to see that people think that we have conquered Covid.

"Covid is still here. Yes, we have more tools now to deal with it, but we don't resolve issues by, you know, going to Ottawa and disrupting people's lives and saying that a democratically-elected government five months ago should step down and that the governor-general and three leaders of the convoy should step in. That's not our democracy. That's not the Canada that I know."

Plan to take over capital

Regarding the emerging evidence that at least three of the Freedom Convoy's senior organizers were former law enforcement officers and military intelligence veterans (including an ex-RCMP officer who was assigned to the Prime Minister's bodyguard detail), Koutrakis said, "One doesn't have to be a brain surgeon

to realize that this involved some very well thought-out, highly-organized planning to take over our capital. It's very disturbing to find out."

Concerning the Ottawa Police Service's failure to deal effectively with the crisis even though this was its mandate, she said, "There's no question that the Ottawa Police unfortunately were not prepared. I don't know if they didn't have the proper intelligence. And if they didn't have the proper intelligence, it begs the question why nothing was done. Why were they not better prepared to shut it down?"

Safeguarding Parliament

She suggested that if a need is seen for a new agency, on a more permanent basis, to make sure the Parliament Hill area is safe from serious threats, then the federal government should look into forming a new security unit with that specific mandate.

"I don't know how much if that is federal jurisdiction," said Koutrakis. "I would imagine, because of jurisdiction, it would be mostly the city which is a creation of the province. But one has to wonder: Where was the province, where was the city? There was a huge failure, a huge breakdown and I think that we need to really dig down deep to find out what happened."

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De Cotis pays homage to Olympic figure skater Tina Garabedian

Ice dancer was only athlete from Laval at the Beijing Winter Olympics



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David De Cotis, Action Laval city councillor for Laval's Saint-Bruno district, noted proudly this week that Tina Garabedian, a figure skater whose home town is Laval, performed with her skating partner Simon-Proulx Sénécal at the recent Beijing Winter Olympics.

From Sainte-Dorothée

Garabedian was born and grew up in Laval's Sainte-Dorothée district. Tina Garabedian "is a wonderful example of determination and perseverance," said De Cotis. "I tip my hat to

her. Laval's youths are all able to reach heights like this and this is proof it."

Tina Garabedian first tied on skates as a member of the Laval CPA figure skating club. After learning skills as a member of the club's synchronized skate team, she decided to focus on ice dancing.

Laval in Beijing

"I am very happy to have been able to bring a little bit of Laval with me onto the ice in Beijing," she said in a statement to The Laval News. "I will be doing my best to bring honour to my city."

Tina Garabedian was the only athlete from Laval participating in this year's Winter Olympics. The ice dance competitions took place last week on Saturday and Sunday.

Freedom Convoy 2022 'advocated civil war,' CSIS intel report claims

Ex-RCMP officer, assigned to guard Trudeau, identified as a senior organizer



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The Canadian Security Intelligence Service's ITAC unit warned late last month, just before the Freedom Convoy staked out Parliament Hill, that protesters, including some extremists, "could use rudimentary capabilities, such as trucks, cargo and fuel, to cause disruptions to infrastructure," according to a report by the U.K.-based Guardian newspaper.

Threat underestimated

The Integrated Terrorism Assessment Centre (ITAC) is a federal organization within CSIS, responsible for assessing worldwide terrorism threats to Canada and Canadian interests. According to a description on the ITAC website, its purpose is to provide support for the decision-making needs of senior federal leaders.

A report generated by ITAC on the Freedom Convoy, which The Guardian claimed last week to have seen, stated that the Ottawa Police Service – which has a mandate to provide overall security in the nation's capital – was warned of the imminent arrival of the Freedom Convoy, although it later emerged that the OPS underestimated what they would be dealing with.

Canada's 'January 6'

As cited by The Guardian, the ITAC report said supporters of the convoy "advocated civil war," called for violence against Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and said the protest should be "used as Canada's 'January 6'," which was a reference to the storming of the United States Capitol in Washington DC in early January last year.

"Extremists and other individuals supporting

Covid-19 conspiracy theories and violent anti-authority/anti-government views have expressed intent to participate in the convoy and to attend the accompanying protest in Ottawa," The Guardian said, quoting from the ITAC report.

\$5,000 or five years jail

Last week, during a webcast briefing on the government's enactment of the Emergencies Act in which Newsfirst Multimedia participated, senior administrative officials with Public Safety Canada outlined the consequences for protesters defying orders to leave Ottawa, including \$5,000 fines or five years in jail. The same penalties could also be applied to anyone bringing aid to participants such as food or fuel.

While the Emergencies Act covers four types of threat, the second, known as a Public Order Emergency, is being used, and is defined as being "for an emergency that arises from threats to the security of Canada and that is so serious as to be a national emergency."

Defining a Public Order Emergency

The Emergencies Act classifies any or all of these threats as a Public Order Emergency:

- Espionage or sabotage that is against Canada or is detrimental to the interests of Canada or activities directed toward or in support of such espionage or sabotage;
- Foreign influenced activities within or relating to Canada that are detrimental to the interests of Canada and are clandestine or deceptive or involve a threat to any person;
- Activities within or relating to Canada directed toward or in support of the threat or use of acts of serious violence against persons or

property for the purpose of achieving a political, religious or ideological objective within Canada or a foreign state;

(d) And activities directed toward undermining by covert unlawful acts, or directed toward or intended ultimately to lead to the destruction or overthrow by violence of the constitutionally established system of government in Canada.

Officials requested anonymity

The list of threats cited as justification to invoke the act does not include lawful advocacy, protest or dissent, unless the latter take place in conjunction with any of the activities referred to in paragraphs (a) to (d). Such was the overall state of alarm hanging over the nation's capital last week that Public Safety Canada asked media to not identify its experts and spokespeople.

The Emergencies Act regulations listed the places where blockades are no longer being allowed, including Parliament Hill and the streets around it where there are many federal buildings, airports, harbours, border crossings, piers, lighthouses, canals, interprovincial and international bridges, hospitals, trade corridors and infrastructure needed for the supply of utilities including power generation and transmission.

Accounts ordered frozen

A special order on emergency economic measures also gave powers to police, banks and insurance companies to freeze accounts and cancel vehicle insurance policies belonging to people deemed to be protesters and who

refused to cooperate by leaving when ordered.

As well, the Emergencies Act designated towing companies as an essential service that can be ordered by police to remove trucks, failing which tow trucks can be seized to allow police to complete the task themselves.

The New York Times reported last week that a team of leaders from Freedom Convoy 2022 worked out of operational centres located in hotel rooms a short distance from Parliament Hill, "some with military and right-wing organizing backgrounds," who "orchestrated a disciplined and highly coordinated occupation ... It is a crew that includes former law enforcement officers, military veterans and conservative organizers ..."

Convoy leader guarded PM

On Feb. 9, CBC News identified the chief of security for Freedom Convoy 2022 as Daniel Bulford, a former RCMP officer who was on Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's personal body-guard detail until last year. According to the CBC, Bulford quit after refusing to be vaccinated against COVID-19.

CBC News also identified two other senior Freedom Convoy organizers as former law enforcement officers or military veterans.

Tom Quiggin, a former military intelligence officer also worked with the RCMP and was considered one of the country's top counter-terrorism experts. And Tom Marazzo, identified as an ex-military officer who served in the Canadian Forces for 25 years, now works as a freelance software developer, said the CBC.



Police in Ottawa work to remove protesters, some of whom have been camped in their trucks near Parliament Hill for weeks, on Saturday. (Photo: Newsfirst Multimedia)



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OPINION & Editorial

THAT'S WHAT I'M THINKING

Robert Vairo



Sweet peaceful Canada comes to an abrupt halt

I listened to Canada's National Anthem when our Women's hockey team won gold last week, with their glowing full teeth smile. We were all so proud of them, playing all out for 60 minutes of every game of the tournament. They were doing it as a team, riveted to their system of play, supporting each other in corners, protecting their goalie, playing two-way hockey like I have not seen some NHL teams perform this season. And then my attention focused on the Anthem, as the women stood proudly displaying gold around their neck. "True patriot love in all of us command" jarred me to reality. It suddenly sounded empty. I sometimes sing the anthem out loud to celebrate 'the thrill of victory,' winning gold, being the best in the world. Not this time. I could not bring myself to sing because like most of us, I also had an eye on the scenes from the Ottawa occupation. A news junky, hungry for coverage from different sources, live where possible, lap tops, the desk top, and the phone close by, I perhaps saw too much of what Canada has become. And I did not like it.

How has it come to this? It should come as no surprise that an anti science, anti government movement has been growing for years, brought to the surface and becoming more evident by the pandemic and its accompanying vaccines, and ever changing and often conflicting restrictions. Alienated and frustrated for not having a voice nor a choice, we are seeing open aggression and death threats towards health care workers, journalists, politicians, grocery, restaurant and store employees. Reporters and private health care providers remove corporate logos from their cars for their own safety.

This may be a sign of the times. The Ottawa protests could have been avoided with polit-

ical leadership in Canada, and not one that is consistently divisive. And because of our proximity to the Americans, the importation of their alt right extremism and violence seems inevitable.

There was debate in the House of Commons, something we have not seen with the Trudeau liberals since the pandemic began two years ago. It was not pretty. The fangs were out on both sides but at least democracy is functioning.

As the protest morphed into occupation (trucks blocking main streets for weeks, and a base camp set up is not a protest) we quickly realized the police force was initially understaffed (so much for 'defund the police' movement). They were unprepared and led by an overwhelmed police chief who was eventually forced to resign. So, enraged citizens took it upon themselves to step up. They formed their own counter blockades, and one obtained an injunction that would stop the tormenting horn honking, thanks to a 21-year-old civil servant Zexi Li. And eventually the "freezing of digital assets and bank accounts of convoy leaders," that fueled the Ottawa chaos.

Perhaps it has been building for some time but it seems in just the last few years there has been "political instability, a changing economy, racism in our schools and communities," and most significantly, a loss of importance and significance of Canada among world nations.

We also realized our current laws are apparently not sufficient to deal with this unprecedented protest, unprecedented occupation, a potential insurgency. The arrested leaders wanted to have an un-elected seat in government. The frustration and alienation are understandable, and so is a peaceful protest, but the aggression promoted by the growth of extremists and foreign interference is not. Our governments and police forces

were not prepared, until the 22nd day.

There was a plethora of surveys available detailing Canadians' opinions during the occupation. "Three Quarters of Canadians Want Protestors to go Home." Another headline read "Large majority in Ottawa Oppose Freedom Convoy," and, "Are you in Favour of Invoking the Emergencies Act?"

But there were no surveys asking how the convoy became "a melting pot for individuals with a wide variety of grievances," and misinformation. No surveys asking Canadians how do we fix this? How do we change, and, what new direction do we take? How do we become "strong and free" again?

The point is, this is not the country I knew. Sweet, peaceful Canada has come to an abrupt halt.

This is not the first time we have faced such polarization. Canadian history is full of well-known events that have led to changes, usually but not always for the better.

In the end, declaring the Emergencies Act may just be a pause in the next display of populist anger.

ADDED NOTE:

\$15 million per day is the loss to retailers because of the "Freedom Convoy." That does not include the cost of the tri level police forces from across Canada. Perhaps more important than monetary, the emotional cost of keeping a city hostage, with noise, belching diesel fumes, insults, and intimidation of masked pedestrians, even menacing children in school yards.

That's What I'm Thinking
Robert Vairo
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#NewsMatters:

The National
Assembly Report

By Raquel Fletcher

Clause-by-clause study of language law quickly gets controversial

As the adage goes, the devil is in the details and Bill 96, the government's proposed French language reform legislation has a lot of details. The National Assembly committee studying the bill is in the clause-by-clause stage, a meticulous and methodic process of analyzing its 201 articles.

It didn't take long for things to get controversial. During its committee work Thursday afternoon, Liberal MNA David Birnbaum called out French Language Minister Simon Jolin-Barrette about an article concerning temporary foreign workers.

"I have to learn how to say, 'red herring' in French because there are 500 kilograms of it in this room," he said.

Under the current law, temporary foreign workers can apply for an exemption to Bill 101 to send their kids to school in English. Bill 96 aims to limit that exemption to three years. Jolin-Barrette said this modification would provide an incentive to workers who suspect they might stay longer or even apply to become permanent residents to send their kids to school in French from the beginning.

The minister argued it would facilitate their integration faster. It also closes a loophole in the law by which immigrants could theoretically use the temporary worker route instead of applying through the regular immigration process to strategically bypass Bill 101. Children who are granted exemptions could potentially gain an acquired right to be able to send their own children and grandchildren to English school.

Birnbaum said framing the issue this way is offensive because it paints immigrants as being antagonistic towards the protection of the French language.

"I have to say, if I was currently a temporary worker and I heard this, I would be pretty insulted by these allusions that suggest I am somehow hostile to French in Quebec or that I'm part of some spontaneous army that has descended on Quebec in order to anglicize this corner of North America," he said in committee.

The red herring, he said, is that the number of people taking advantage of this theoretical loophole is probably marginal, although the minister failed to provide numbers.

"This discussion on temporary stays in Quebec is emblematic of the key issues before us in trying to find positive and inclusive ways to promote the French language," Birnbaum said in a phone interview.

The discussion so far has not been positive, nor inclusive, he said, pointing out that this reform could seriously hurt the Quebec economy.

Skilled workers may move elsewhere

The Bill 101 exemption for temporary stays

encourages highly skilled workers, including academics and scientists to work in Quebec because they know they will be able to send their kids to school in English. In exchange, the province benefits from their expertise. However, without the possibility to renew the exemption, this highly skilled workforce may choose to move elsewhere.

The Liberal Party is proposing an amendment to allow for one renewal, so children of temporary workers could attend English school for a maximum of six years. However, Jolin-Barrette indicated he would not adopt this amendment. The article was included "because there's a hole in the law," he said.

Then switching to English, he asked Birnbaum directly, "There's a breach in the law. You don't want to fix it? You want to let it happen?"

In a cheeky retort, Birnbaum once again asked the minister to quantify the size of this supposed hole. "Is it a pothole or is it the Quebec tunnel?" he asked, referring to the government's controversial third link project for Quebec City.

The committee has been studying this bill for about 60 hours. It is a quarter of the way through the legislation. It has already adopted an article which gives immigrants a six-month window to learn French. After that, the public service must only communicate in French in written correspondence with immigrants.

Debate around even more controversial aspects of Bill 96 is yet to come, including special provisions for the Office québécois de la langue française to conduct searches and seizures.

Emergencies Act ...

Political parties standing firm

Canada's political parties are standing firm in their positions during two days of weekend debates on the use of the Emergencies Act, ahead of a key vote on Monday on whether to ratify the extraordinary powers.

MPs, who have been sparring in the House of Commons hour after hour, were sitting from 7 a.m. ET to midnight on both Saturday and Sunday.

At-times tense and personal debate has pitted the Liberal government against the Conservatives and Bloc Québécois, a combination Liberal MP Kevin Lamoureux referred to as an "unholy alliance." The New Democrats have said they will support the government's use of the act but have urged the Liberals to tread carefully, while reserving the right to pull support at any time.

Emergency Preparedness Minister Bill Blair said Sunday that the "vigorous" debates over the Emergencies Act are a sign of a healthy democracy, casting the discussion in a positive light a day after a major police action cleared protesters away from Parliament Hill on Saturday.

Protests not an emergency: Conservatives

Conservative MP Pierre Poilievre, who has announced he is seeking the leadership of his party, accused Prime Minister Justin Trudeau of engineering the crisis for political gain.

"They have attempted to amplify and take advantage of every pain, every fear, every tragedy that has struck throughout this pandemic in order to divide one person against another and replace the people's freedom with the government's power," he said Saturday.

Poilievre said the Emergencies Act was the "latest and greatest example of attacks on our freedom."

The Conservatives argue that the protests do not rise to the level of an emergency and do not warrant the use of extraordinary powers — claiming the government's actions are "sinister" and politically motivated.

"There is no emergency, there is no threat to our democracy, and it's a shame the government has not pulled this bill," said Warren Steinley, a Conservative MP from Saskatchewan. Steinley was among several Conservative MPs who voiced support and visited with protesters earlier in the month. The party has since called for the end of the demonstrations.

Other Conservatives characterized the protests as a matter more appropriately dealt with by Ottawa police, not an emergency response.

"There's no al-Qaeda, there's no Taliban, there's no North Korean special forces looking to take over the government. Mr. Speaker, this is a matter for local law enforcement officials, and it is wrong for this government to make it out to be anything more than that," said Conservative MP Michael Kram.

Liberals arguments

Yasir Naqvi, the Liberal MP for Ottawa Centre, made an impassioned speech on Sunday outlining the harms of the protest on the city's downtown.

"I cannot overstate the profound impact this occupation has had on my community," he said, adding it will take time to heal.

Liberals argue measures are restrained, limited. The governing Liberals have argued that the Emergencies Act was necessary to put an end to the protests in Ottawa and others across the country, pointing to such measures as cutting off financial supports and compelling the service

of tow truck drivers.

The measures are automatically time-limited, expiring after 30 days, and Parliament has the power to revoke the emergency declaration either in initial votes this week or at any point during the month-long window.

In defending their decision, Liberals have repeatedly pointed to comments made by interim Ottawa police Chief Steve Bell on Friday, in which he noted the Emergencies Act had allowed police to set up barriers and secure an area in the city's downtown.

Mixed support from premiers

The government's use of the Emergencies Act received an uneasy response from premiers throughout, with some like Ontario Premier Doug Ford speaking out in support, while others were opposed.

In a separate interview airing Sunday, B.C. Premier John Horgan said while many premiers agreed the situation was serious, they were concerned with federal overreach.

"I think the premiers agreed that the events in Ottawa were just not tenable and something had to be done. But at the same time, we all expressed our concerns about the intrusion into provincial jurisdiction. We all expressed a concern that it be locally focused, geographically focused," he said.

Premier Jason Kenney in neighbouring Alberta took a much harder line, saying on Saturday his government would challenge the use of the act and potentially join as an intervener in a separate case being launched by the Canadian Civil Liberties Association.

"That kind of extraordinary power I don't think is justified," Kenney told Barton in an interview that took place Friday, ahead of his announcement.

"I think they could have dealt with the situation in Ottawa using the same sort of laws they were using in Windsor and at Coutts," he said, referring to blockades of border crossings in Windsor, Ont., and Coutts, Alta

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Snow ops still underway in Laval after another snowfall

Some advice to help ease the way for snow removal crews

The City of Laval's snow removal crews were still hard at work earlier this week, removing the latest covering of white stuff that mother nature left behind. In all, last week's storm was the third major snow event the city has had to contend with this winter.

Read the signs

As always, officials with the city are reminding residents that in order to maximize the efficiency of snow removal operations, the public's cooperation is needed, especially with regards to street parking and allowing snow removal crews to get their job done.

With that in mind, snow removal warning notices and signs should always be heeded. The best thing to do on days when snow crews are scheduled to pass along your street is park in your own driveway.

Careful when parking

If parking on the street before crews are scheduled to pass, your vehicle should be parked around 30 centimetres from the curb so that the sidewalk snow plow can pass by safely, while being careful not to obstruct street traffic passing by.

It is also recommended to shovel snow onto your own property, rather than onto the street or sidewalk. As well, garbage, recycling and kitchen waste bins should be placed just on the edge of your property where they won't interfere with snow removal operations.



Laval City Council Meetings: Open to the public

The City of Laval announces that citizens may once more attend in person the municipal council meetings. The next meeting, which will take place on March 1, will welcome council members and citizens wishing to attend and ask questions. In order to comply with sanitary measures, the wearing of a face covering will be required at all times.

Citizens wishing to attend the session and ask their questions will be able to download the online form at laval.ca or fill it out on site during the period provided for this purpose.

Please note that the Laval City Hall offices are currently located at 3131 Saint-Martin Boulevard West. Citizens will still be able to follow the debates live at webdiffusion.laval.ca from 7 p.m.

Question Period

To ask a question to the elected members of the municipal council on March 1, citizens must arrive between 6 p.m. and 6:45 p.m. at Laval City Hall and submit the form previously completed or will be able to fill one out on site. The Registration Form for Citizens' Question Period is available at <https://www.laval.ca/Documents/Pages/Fr/A-propos/administration-municipale/comite-executif-conseil-municipal/formulaire-enregistrement-questions-citoyens-conseil-presentiel.pdf>



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Action Laval questions STL board's willingness to settle labour dispute

Bus drivers, management have been in negotiations for more than a year



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Two Action Laval city council members are raising questions about the intense negotiations that have been underway since last year between the Société de transport de Laval and the union representing the transit agency's bus drivers.

"Following the announcement of arbitration being rejected by the drivers, it would seem that management has lost control in the negotiations and relations with the drivers have become toxic," Chomedey city councillor Aglaia Revelakis and Saint-Bruno city councillor David De Cotis said in a statement.

Get serious, they say



While noting that negotiations of the collective agreement have been dragging on for more than a year and the ensuing conflict is interfering with transit services, they suggested the administration of

the STL needs to acknowledge the seriousness of the situation and take appropriate action.

"The mayor chose five elected members from his party to represent the municipal council on the board of directors of the STL," said De Cotis, who used to be president of the transit authority.

Want board to act

"The general manager no longer seems to be in control of negotiations. So, maybe the time has come for the board to act and change who is sitting around the negotiations table. They should be doing more than just collecting their salaries."

While pointing out that the City of Laval provides more than \$93 million annually to the STL, Action Laval said the councillors who sit on the STL board should be representing the interests of the city, and by extension those of the residents, and therefore should be actively participating in all decisions.

Using taxes properly

"They should be making sure that the taxes of citizens are being put to their best use," said Revelakis. "Their role is to supervise the management at the STL. They are not there to be told what to do, but to provide guidance."

In its statement, Action Laval added, "Drivers are fundamental to the mission of the STL. Their role is essential to providing service to users. Without drivers, the STL couldn't provide any service. The board of directors must ensure that management remains centered on the mission of the STL, and not on their own comfort."



Prices for everything from homes to gasoline to groceries are going up, up, up

It doesn't matter if you're just stopping into the store to buy some milk and eggs or saving to buy your first home — chances are you're going to experience some sticker shock. That's because the price of nearly everything is rising.

Cost of everything going up fast but energy, food and transportation more than most

Inflation is at its highest level in decades and gasoline prices are one of the biggest factors in the sharply higher cost of living. Canada's inflation rate hit 5.1 per cent in January, its highest level since 1991.

Statistics Canada reported Wednesday that if volatile items, like food and energy, are stripped out of the numbers, the cost of living went up at a pace of 4.3 per cent. But even that toned-down figure is the highest dating back to 1999.

Grocery bills continue to rise quickly, with the price of food purchased at stores up 6.5 per cent in the year leading up to January. That's the fastest pace since 2009.

Skyrocketing prices for fruit and vegetables are taking a huge bite out of family budgets and making grocery bills get even longer and more expensive every week. Food isn't the only thing getting more expensive.

Housing prices

The cost of keeping a roof over your head also continues its ascent, as shelter costs rose by 6.2 per cent in the past year. That's the fastest increase since 1990.

The Canadian Real Estate Association says the average home price increased by 21 per cent in the past year to \$748,450 — the highest on record. Meanwhile, the rate of inflation continues to increase, rising to 5.1%, the highest levels since 1991, according to Statistics Canada. Supply-chain imbalances caused by the pandemic, coupled with record amounts of stimulus spending, have combined to push up inflation just about everywhere.

Energy getting more expensive

Gasoline prices increased by 4.8 per cent

during the month, and are now 31 per cent higher than they were this time last year.

Why the price of gas keeps going up in most provinces

Consumers tend to notice high gasoline prices when they fill up their own vehicles, but those higher costs for things like energy and transportation hit businesses too, which also filters down to the price that consumers pay for goods.

Higher transportation costs affect retail prices

Suppliers are feeling the pinch of higher costs

for things like energy and gasoline, and that filters down to the price that consumers pay.

Higher input costs for the supply chain is a recipe for even higher inflation, and energy prices are showing no signs of subsiding, economist Royce Mendes with Desjardins says.

"With energy prices continuing to rise, inflation is set to accelerate even further and is unlikely to materially slow down before April," Mendes said.

By then, Canada's central bank is expected to have raised its benchmark interest rate slightly higher, the first of many moves aimed at reining in runaway inflation.

Canada is not the only country grappling with high inflation. Supply-chain imbalances caused by the pandemic, coupled with record amounts of stimulus spending, have combined to push up inflation just about everywhere. The U.S. inflation rate hit 7.5 per cent in January — its highest level in 40 years.

While economists had been expecting Canada's rate to be high, the 5.1 per cent rate was higher than the 4.8 per cent figure that a consensus of those polled by Bloomberg had been expecting.

STL news February 2022



What do you have to tell us?

With the pandemic, your habits have turned upside down, you may have faced some new challenges and your needs may have changed.

It's the same for the STL: we are in a time of change and we really want to hear from you.

Help us to better understand your expectations and improve your experience. As a token of our appreciation, some great prizes will be drawn for participants.

Take our survey at STLaval.ca/winter2022



Work from home, go back to the office or work in hybrid mode: Choose the best approach for you

If you only need to commute by bus within Laval, opt for an STL fare or pass. If you make no more than four round trips per week, the STL's 8-ticket bundle will cost less than a monthly pass.

If you need to use more than one mode of transportation between Laval, Montréal or the urban agglomeration of Longueuil, the 10-ticket All Modes AB bundle could be the best deal. If you make over 15 round trips per month, the TRAM Zone 3 monthly pass is likely the best option.

Find the right fare or pass at STLaval.ca/purchase

The not-so-secret bus code

Have you noticed a four-digit ID number on every one of our buses? Do you know what it means?

We prepared a fun read for you, if you're interested or want to try decoding our buses.

Learn all about it at STLaval.ca/decoding

You can still listen to our podcast!

Listen to episodes of our French-language podcast "Prochain arrêt, un balado de la STL" for stories from bus drivers, to meet one of the first female bus drivers, to learn how we plan the network and much more.

Listen to our podcast on your favourite platform or on STLaval.ca/balado



Prochain arrêt, un balado de la STL.



Gas prices at a Shell gas station in Surrey, British Columbia on Tuesday, February 15, 2022.



STLaval.ca | Customer Contact Center: 450-688-6520

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MATURE LIFE

9 safety tips for walking in winter

Freezing rain and hard-packed snow create icy conditions that make walking a hazard in winter. Before you venture outside this season, be sure



to follow these nine safety tips to avoid falls and injuries.

1. Maintain a wide stance with your feet about 30 centimetres apart
2. Keep your knees slightly bent to lower your centre of gravity
3. Walk slowly and take small steps, even if you're in a hurry
4. Place your whole foot down at once, rather than leading with your toes or heel
5. Opt for lightweight boots with non-slip soles, and avoid wearing high heels
6. If you wear ice cleats, remove them before walking on smooth, hard surfaces
7. Use a cane adjusted to your height, and attach a retractable ice pick to the end
8. Dress warmly to avoid shaking, which can make it harder to keep your balance

9. Wear padded underwear or hip protectors to reduce the risk of injury if you fall

While these precautions can help keep you safe, be sure to take advantage of delivery services offered by grocery stores and pharmacies to limit your need to go out in bad weather.

Laval English-speaking Senior Wellness Centre

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5 signs you need new glasses

As you get older, your vision changes. This means that if you've been wearing the same eyewear for years, you're likely due for an upgrade. Here are five signs that it's time to get new glasses.

stretch over time, causing them to no longer fit properly.

The best way to ensure you have the right prescription is to schedule an eye exam with your optometrist at least once a year.

1. YOUR VISION IS A LITTLE BLURRY

If distant objects appear to be out of focus, or if you struggle to make out the words on a page even with your glasses on, you likely need a stronger prescription.

2. YOU GET FREQUENT HEADACHES

Even if you haven't noticed a change in your vision, your eyes might be straining to see clearly. This can lead to eye fatigue and headaches.

3. YOUR EYES OFTEN FEEL ACHY

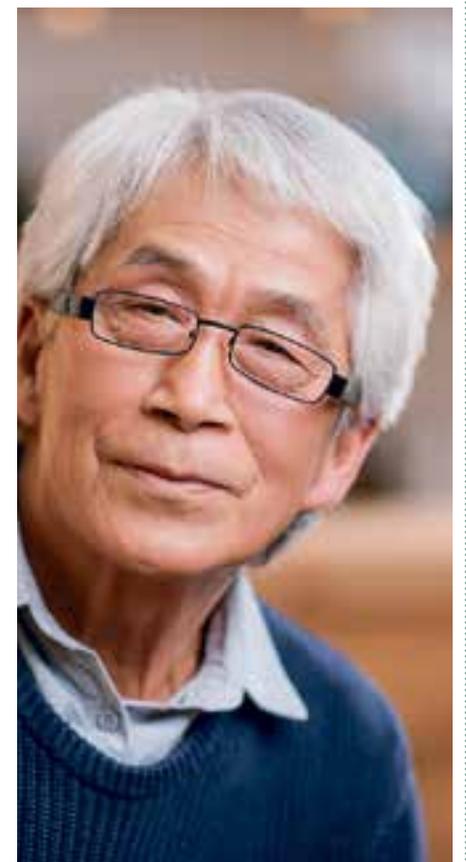
Tired, watery, itchy and dry eyes are all signs that your eyes might be working harder than normal to compensate for an outdated prescription.

4. YOU NEED TO SQUINT TO SEE

If you have the correct eyewear prescription, you shouldn't need to squint to see clearly. While squinting improves the focus and clarity of your vision, it also causes eye strain.

5. YOUR GLASSES ARE DAMAGED

Scratches on your lenses can impede your vision and lead to eye strain. Additionally, the arms of your glasses can





Respite care:

3 reasons it may be right for you

Respite care is designed to ease the burden of caregivers by temporarily taking over the responsibilities of attending to a sick, aging or disabled family member. If you're the primary caregiver for a spouse or other elderly relative, respite care can be a valuable resource. Here's why you should take advantage of the services available in your area.

1. YOU'LL BE ABLE TO TAKE TIME FOR YOURSELF

With the knowledge that your loved one is in good hands, you can visit with friends, take up a hobby, go on vacation, run errands or simply relax at home. Far from selfish, taking breaks is vital to your well-being and continued success as a caregiver.

2. YOU'LL REDUCE STRESS AND THE RISK OF BURNOUT

Respite services offer relief from your daily caregiving duties, which can be physically and emotionally exhausting. With the support of respite care, you can recharge, lead a balanced life and avoid isolation. In turn, this gives you more energy to be a better caregiver.

3. YOU'LL ENSURE YOUR LOVED ONE CAN CONTINUE TO LIVE AT HOME

Often, family members take on the role of caregiver to avoid sending a loved one to live in a long-term care facility. However, without the assistance of respite care, this taxing job might not be a sustainable option.

Various programs are available to provide respite services for anywhere from a few hours to a few weeks. These services can be provided at a seniors' residence, an adult day care facility or the care receiver's home. For more information about respite care programs in your area, contact local home nursing agencies, retirement homes and adult day care facilities.



When should you request home care services?

If it has become difficult to complete your daily tasks, the services offered by home care providers can make life easier while allowing you to preserve your independence. Here are a few reasons you might want to consider this type of care.

YOUR HOUSEHOLD CHORES EXHAUST YOU

If cleaning the bathroom or washing the floors is too taxing, delegate these jobs to a qualified professional. This will leave you with more energy for activities you enjoy such as walking, gardening and socializing.

YOU DON'T WANT TO MOVE INTO A RESIDENCE

Leaving your home to live in a retirement community may not be what you want to do. Fortunately, with the right home care services, you can continue to live safely at home for several more years.

YOU NEED HELP WITH A MEDICAL TREATMENT

Do you tend to forget to take your medication or lack the motivation to do rehabilitation exercises after an operation? If so, home care workers can give you the support you need during your recovery or an on-going treatment.



If you want to maintain your health and well-being in the comfort of your own house, home care services might be just what you need.

ALL KINDS OF HELP

Home care providers offer a wide range of services that can help you safely live in your house. You can get assistance with:

- Housekeeping (vacuuming, laundry, taking out the garbage, etc.)
- Meal preparation according to your diet restrictions and preferences
- Grocery shopping and running errands
- Commuting to doctor's appointments
- Post-hospitalization wound or ostomy care
- Nursing care for chronic conditions like diabetes or high blood pressure
- Around-the-clock monitoring

Normal aging: what to expect as you get older

From lapses in memory to joint pain and hair loss, a wide range of symptoms are often chalked up to getting old. But which changes are really considered a normal part of the aging process? Here's some of what you can expect as you get older.

A DIFFERENT EXPERIENCE FOR EVERYONE

Aging is a complex process that affects every system in the body. But while all people age, not everyone does so at the same rate. This means that people of the same age can look and feel very different as they get

older. In other words, their chronological ages are identical, but their biological ages don't match.

NOTICEABLE SIGNS OF NORMAL AGING

It's important to note that normal age-related changes happen gradually and aren't the result of an underlying medical condition. Nevertheless, aging does eventually have noticeable effects on the body, including:

- Weakened vision (presbyopia)
- Gradual loss of hearing (presbycusis)
- Slight decrease in memory and learning skills
- Loss of muscular endurance and strength
- Diminished sensations such as

hunger and thirst

- Increase in percentage of body fat

TIPS FOR HEALTHY AGING

The best way to delay the effects of aging is to maintain healthy lifestyle habits. Among other things, you should avoid smoking, limit your alcohol consumption, exercise daily, get enough sleep, keep in touch with loved ones and challenge your mind with puzzles, reading and strategy games.

Finally, be sure to schedule regular appointments with your family doctor, optometrist, audiologist and other health-care professionals. This increases the likelihood of medical issues being detected and treated early.





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Coalition for the Dignity of Seniors to hold Estates General in May



MARTIN C. BARRY
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter
For The Laval News
marty@newsfirst.ca

An umbrella group representing the interests of senior citizens across Quebec says it will be holding a general assembly in Quebec City in early May to discuss major issues affecting the province's retirees – with a special focus on their living conditions.

"We would like to see representatives of civil society and Quebec experts position themselves with regard to the 38 solutions we have developed, in order to perfect them, prioritize them and put forward the best ways to age better in Quebec," said Rose-Mary Thonney, president of the Quebec Association of Retirees in the Public and Parapublic Sectors (AQRP), one of the groups that plans to participate in the Coalition for the Dignity of Seniors' estates general on May 3.

"Together, we want to develop a joint declaration, which will help to outline what we see as living conditions that are truly adapted to the needs and desires of seniors, because living is also about getting older," added Lise Lapointe, president of the Association des retraités et retraitées de l'éducation et autres services publics du Québec (AREQ). The 38 solutions proposed by the coalition are grouped under four main themes: health, finance, seniors' rights and citizen participation.

Health

The coalition wants to put an end to the hospital-centered vision of Quebec's health system, which it says "goes against the will of the majority who want to stay at home as long as possible. Inevitably, budgets for home care and services will have to be adjusted to this desire. Greater investments will also need to be made in prevention and in promoting healthy lifestyles."

"The way care is provided must be rethought in order to promote greater autonomy for seniors in order to allow them to find, relearn, recover or maintain the skills and functions necessary to carry out their daily activities," said Andrée Lamontagne, president of the Regroupement interprofessionnel des intervenantes retraitées des services de santé (RIIRS).

Finance

The coalition maintains that financial and tax aspects are fundamental to ensuring well-being and ageing with dignity. The enhancement of the Guaranteed Income Supplement and the Old Age Security Pension, the tax credit

for medical expenses and the reduction of the eligibility threshold from 3 per cent to 1.5 per cent for those aged 65 and over are among the 38 solutions proposed by the coalition.

Pierre Lynch, president of the Association québécoise de défense des droits des personnes retraitées et préretraitées (AQDR), cited statistics on the incomes of Quebec seniors to reinforce the coalition's case. In April 2021, he noted, the Institut de recherche et d'informations socioéconomiques (IRIS) established that the average sustainable individual income in Quebec is \$28,000. Yet according to statistics currently available, he added, nearly 33 per cent of Quebec seniors have incomes of less than \$20,000, which the coalition regards as unacceptable.

Advocacy

The coalition believes the rights of seniors need to be better protected, since the pandemic has been a major awakening, although unacceptable situations existed long before it. With more than a quarter of Quebec's population expected to be over the age of 65 within the next 15 years, the coalition believes that it is imperative to create a position of seniors' protector, independent of the health network and the government.

"It's no longer the time to think, it's the time to act," said Laurent Aubin, president of the Association québécoise des directeurs et directrices d'établissement d'enseignement retraités (AQDER). "So, it is very quickly that our society must adapt to this new demographic reality. We must ensure that seniors age with dignity and that their rights are respected in all our institutions."

Citizen participation

The coalition says that even though society's treatment of seniors has come under the spotlight during the pandemic, seniors don't need to be treated like children and must be encouraged to come out of their isolation. The group says seniors can and should be part of public policy thinking at all levels.

While taking into account immigrant seniors and the LGBTQ+ community, the Coalition for the Dignity of Seniors proposes that projects be quickly put in place to allow seniors to express themselves and integrate into their community.

"Citizen participation is an essential part of the lives of seniors who, for the vast majority, are autonomous, socially active, economically independent and actively contribute to society," said Mireille Beaulac, president of the Alliance des associations des retraités (AAR).



Photo: (From the left, starting at the top): Laurent Aubin, president of the Association québécoise des directeurs et directrices d'établissement d'enseignement retraités (AQDER), Rose-Mary Thonney, president of the Association québécoise des retraités des secteurs publics et parapublics (AQRP), Pierre Lynch, president of the Association québécoise de défense des droits des personnes retraitées et préretraitées (AQDR), Andrée Lamontagne, president of the Regroupement interprofessionnel des intervenantes retraitées des services de santé (RIIRS), Lise Lapointe, president of the Association des retraités et retraitées de l'éducation et autres services publics du Québec (AREQ), and Mireille Beaulac, president of the Alliance des associations des retraités (AAR).

"Name the Puppy" 2022

It is that time of year again. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) needs help in naming the puppies that will become Canada's future RCMP Police Dogs.

The Police Dog Service Training Centre (PDSTC) in Innisfail, Alberta is asking young Canadians to suggest names for 13 German Shepherd puppies that will be born at the Centre in 2022.

Children are encouraged to be original and imaginative in finding names that will serve these puppies well in their careers with Canada's national police force.

When thinking of names, it is important to keep in mind that these are working police dogs, not pets.

Winning names will be chosen by the PDSTC staff. A draw will determine the winning entry in the event of multiple submissions of the same puppy name.

Although there can be only 13 winners, names not selected for the contest will be considered for other puppies born during the year.

Prizes

The 13 whose names are selected will each receive a laminated 8x10-inch photo of the pup they name, a plush dog named Justice and an RCMP water bottle.

Contest rules are simple:

- Contestants can suggest only 1 name (1 entry per person)
- The name may be for a male or a female pup
- The name must start with the letter "R"
- The name must have no more than 9 letters
- The name must be 1 or 2 syllables
- Contestants must be 4 to 14 years old
- Contestants must live in Canada
- Entries must be received by March 17, 2022

Enter online

To enter the contest, visit us online: Name the Puppy contest

Important dates

The deadline for entries is March 17, 2022. Contest winners and prizes will be announced on April 13, 2022.

Submitting artwork

We no longer accept entries sent through the mail. However, we still love receiving drawings and paintings! After entering online, children have the option to enter their artwork to the Police Dog Service Training Centre at puppy-chiot@rcmp-grc.gc.ca.

All contest entries must be submitted online. We cannot accept contest entries by email.

About the Police Dog Service Training Centre The PDSTC is home to the RCMP national police dog training program and is a part of RCMP Depot Division. The Centre has earned a great reputation for breeding top quality working German Shepherds and for training dogs with outstanding searching and tracking abilities.

Stay connected

Hashtags

English: #namethepuppy

French: #nommelechiotInstagram

Instagram

English: @RCMPDepot

French: @GRCDepot

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SOURCE Royal Canadian Mounted Police



LPD investigating suspected murder/suicide in Duvernay

Investigators from the Laval Police Department have opened an inquiry into what appears to have been a fatal domestic dispute at a home in Laval's Duvernay district.

The son of a couple in their seventies got in touch with the LPD last Saturday evening shortly after 7:30 p.m. after he found the bodies of his parents in their residence on Blois Blvd. near Trois-Rivières Ave.

"When the police arrived on the scene, they found the bodies of the two people unconscious," said LPD media relations officer Stéphanie Beshara. "According to the information we have at the moment, it could be a murder followed by a suicide."

Although the identities of the victims, a 71-year-old woman and her 75-year-old spouse, were not immediately disclosed by the LPD, a Montreal Francophone daily has identified the male spouse as Joao Marques.

"These were a couple of people without any history with the police," added Beshara. "An investigation is underway to better understand the causes and circumstances in this dossier."

A security perimeter was set up around the house. It was the second apparent murder-suicide in Quebec during the previous 24 hours. On Friday the week before, a 62-year-old man and a 59-year-old woman were found dead in Dunham in the Eastern Townships under similar circumstances.

Gunshots fired in Sainte-Dorothée

The Laval region's 9-1-1 operators received several calls during the early morning hours on Thursday last week regarding the sound of gunshots heard in the vicinity of des Azalées St. in Sainte-Dorothée.

Laval Police Dept. officers responding to the scene found bullet impact marks on a front window and on stone work at a residence on that street.

According to the LPD, no one living in the home was injured. A security perimeter was established around the building and an investigation is now underway.

Some recent Laval Fire

Department calls

Feb. 20 - 00:46 AM · Building fire on Maurice-Cullen St. in Laval's Saint-Vincent-de-Paul sector. Commercial building. Smoke visible. Code was 10-07, meaning intervention necessary.

Feb. 8 - 4:01 PM · Building on fire on du Ruisseau St. in Laval's Sainte-Rose sector. One-storey residential building. Flames visible. Code was 10-07, meaning intervention necessary.

LFD was advising motorists to avoid these streets: Terrasse Dufferin / Archambault Blvd.

Feb. 8 - 7:05 PM · Building fire on des Laurentides Blvd. in Laval's Auteuil sector. Two storey, multi-unit residential building. Smoke visible. Code was 10-07, meaning intervention necessary. LFD was advising motorists to avoid these streets: Savard / Sagard.

Quebec Consumer Protection fines Groupe Réno-Expert Habitat \$2,500

(TLN) The Quebec government's Consumer Protection Office has fined Laval-based Groupe Réno-Expert Habitat \$2,500 for making a false claim while applying for a retail business operator's permit four years ago.

According to the provincial agency which oversees consumer protection issues, the company, which specializes in home renovations, submitted an application for permit

renewal in 2018, while failing to mention some previous infractions.

The Office de la protection du consommateur says Groupe Réno-Expert Habitat, whose president is listed in Quebec's registry of businesses and enterprises as Françoise Jean-Denis, had pleaded guilty to breaking the province's consumer protection law during the previous three years.



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24 HOUR MONITORING

In Memoriam & Obituaries

A life remembered

5 things to consider when preplanning a funeral

It's normal to feel uncomfortable about making arrangements for your funeral. However, doing it ensures that the burden doesn't fall on your loved ones. Here are some of the things you'll need to make decisions about when preplanning a funeral.

1. THE FUNERAL HOME

If you want a traditional funeral service, you'll need to select a venue. Factors to keep in mind when choosing a funeral home include ambiance, location and pricing.

2. ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE BODY

Do you want to be buried or cremated? Or maybe you'd rather donate your body to medical research? Deciding what to do with your remains will also likely involve choosing a casket or urn.

3. PRESENTATION OF THE REMAINS

You can choose to present your body at your funeral in either a closed or open casket. If you opt for an open casket, think about the clothing, jewelry and accessories to be worn.

If you want your remains to be cremated, this can take place either before or after the funeral, making presentation of the body an option regardless.

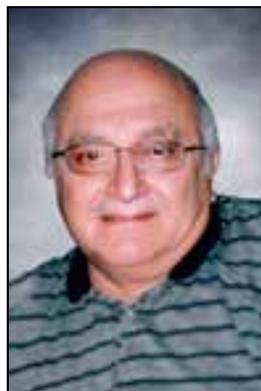
4. TYPE OF FUNERAL SERVICE

Funeral services can be religious affairs or simple celebrations of life. Don't hesitate to personalize the service with a favourite piece of music, poem or bit of scripture. Be sure to also consider floral arrangements and other decor or mementos you may want present.

5. FINAL RESTING PLACE

If you want to be buried, you'll need to select a plot in a cemetery. If you want to be cremated, you'll need to decide where your ashes will be placed. Your final resting place may be incorporated into your funeral service, but it doesn't have to be.

Preplanning a funeral isn't easy, but you don't have to do it alone. Invite a friend or family member to help you, or work with a funeral home that can walk you through the whole process.



KABBABE Edmon
1947 - 2022

Accidentally, it is with deep sadness that the family announces the passing of EDMON KABBABE on wednesday February 16th 2022 at the age of 74. He will be sadly missed by his beloved wife Elham Azar Kabbabe; his loving children Akram (Johnny Diamond), Karen and Saly; his cherished grandson Jonathan Gliven; his nieces and nephews and many other relatives and friends.



PIETTE Christines
1952-2022

From Laval, on February 17, 2022, at the age of 69 passed away Mrs. Christine Piette, wife of Mr. Michel Énard.

Besides her husband, she is survived by her children, Vincent (Julie), Éric (Stéphanie) and Marie-Claude (Daniel), as well as her 3 grandchildren, Xavier, Alexy and Mahée, her brothers and sisters, Luc, Claude (Isabelle), Nicole (late Marc) and France (Carole), her sister-in-law Raymonde (late Claude), and several other relatives and friends.



VICHIT Thang Muon
1954 - 2022

In Laval, on February 12, 2022, at the age of 67, passed away Mrs. Thang Muon Vichit, wife of Mr. Samley Lok.

Besides her husband, she is survived by her parents, Mr. Nam Vichit and Mrs. Duong Kham, her children (Chiuchhuong, Malis, Kolab, Davy, René), her grandchildren (Jerika, Timothie, Talina, Chandara, Marina, Dymitry, Kimberly, Shantiry, Kingston, Keegan), her sister Pen-Rân, her brothers Samboun, Num, Sambath, Bun Loeun, Sinuon, as well as several relatives and friends..



MOUKARZEL Amale
1951- 2022

In Laval, on Saturday, February 12, 2022 passed away, at the age of 71, AMALE MOUKARZEL wife of the late Elie Bechaalani. She is survived by her children Johnny and his wife Désirée Abou Jaoude, Jacques and his wife Zeina Boutros Tannous and Sandra; his brothers Matar and his ex-wife Valérie Pïot and Kamal and his wife Charlotte Ignitiadis; her sisters Ibtissam and her husband Maurice Saad and Lolitta and her husband Roger Abou Jaoude as well as several other relatives and friends.

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DIRECT? ANSWERS

From Wayne & Tamara

Castle Walls

Q My wonderful, funny husband and I have been happily married for over nine years, but starting just a few months after we got married, the frequency of sex declined. Left up to my husband I think we would make love once a month. With my cajoling we probably make love about every two weeks.

I find this very frustrating and cannot understand it. When we do have sex it is great, and from my observations, apparently for both of us. By choice we have no children and have plenty of spare time. We are successful people in our mid-thirties, healthy and fit, and love each other very much.

He isn't having an affair and is otherwise kind and affectionate. My husband is the well-adjusted adult child of an alcoholic father. He is sensitive and super responsible. He never touches me in a sexual way apart from when we make love, which since we have been married, is always in bed.

It drives me crazy, and this is our one disagreement without resolution. In desperation I cajole and use humor to try to loosen him up, with mixed results. When I try to initiate sex, he says he is tired, ticklish, not in the mood, or just wants to read or watch TV until I forget about it.

He insists lovemaking should be spontaneous, but his spontaneity doesn't come around often enough for me! As a sensuous, maturing woman leaving the taboos of youth behind, I find my desire has increased. It is frustrating having a perfectly wonderful but unwilling man asleep next to me. I know men like to be the initiators, but from what I see most men would like more sex, not less!

This is a sore point in what is otherwise a very happy relationship. Talking has not brought about any improvement. When I tell him calmly how I feel, he promises to "try harder and not be such a stick in the mud." Then it goes completely out of his mind.

I can't understand why he views something so pleasurable in a similar way to mowing the lawn. He certainly enjoys it once I get past his resistance

and "his train leaves the station!" Sex for me is like being able to eat chocolate cake with no calories. Why wouldn't you want it!

Marilyn

A Marilyn, when you grow up in chaos, you have to erect walls in order to survive. As a child, your husband built walls which enabled him to cope. Now he needs to realize he doesn't have to be forever the child of his alcoholic father.

Three lessons he learned as a child were: we don't touch, we don't talk about problems, we cover things up to the outside world. To gain control over an uncontrollable situation, he embraced rigid responsibility and learned to put everything in its place (such as, lovemaking is confined to the bedroom).

How he acted served him well socially and at work, but when you live with someone, you can't put on an act day after day. When you were new to each other, the excitement of capture was enough to bring him out of his shell. He made more of an effort, and you were more demure. Then his old pattern asserted itself.

This problem doesn't have to be the thread which unravels the marriage. Public touching will do more than anything to break down his barriers. Holding hands, a peck on the cheek, a quick pat on the tush, all done as expressions of your love, will help release his imprisoned emotions.

In the beginning, he will be mortified. Eventually he will realize that most people simply don't care. After all, you two are married to each other. In time, he will enjoy coloring outside the lines. In time, you will both be free to express yourselves intimately in word and in action.

Finally, in time he will realize that he has the freedom to explore what it means to be the child of an alcoholic.

Wayne & Tamara

The Right Direction

Q One of my best friends asked me to be his girlfriend. I like him as a friend but nothing more. How can I tell him no in a way that won't make us stop being friends? Please answer as quickly as possible.

Marci

A Marci, when you learn to say no, your life gets a whole lot simpler and a whole lot happier. Saying no is often difficult, but it's much easier than saying yes to something you don't want.

Tell your friend that you just want to be

friends. Don't offer an excuse, an explanation, or leave any doubt that your answer is no. Often it is not possible to give a reason, like trying to explain why you like blue and not yellow.

You don't have to justify your feelings to anyone else, and offering lengthy explanations makes things worse. He can't argue with a simple, polite "No." Attempts to save his feelings now will result in more hurt feelings later, and give him hope where there should be none.

You can't find happiness in life without moving in the direction of your true feelings.

Wayne & Tamara

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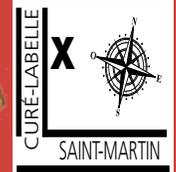
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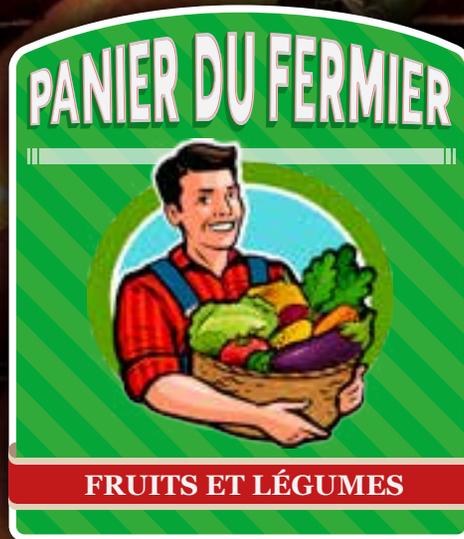
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- Peppers
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- Cucumber
- Onions
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HOROSCOPE

Week of **FEBRUARY 27 TO MARCH 5, 2022**

The luckiest signs this week:
ARIES, TAURUS AND GEMINI



ARIES

It's time to tidy up at work and home. Cleaning your environment will help you clear your mind. You'll get help from those you love.



TAURUS

If you can't decide on a career, you'll be inspired to take on a new challenge you're passionate about. Embracing change will enrich your life.



GEMINI

You'll invest in training, which will broaden your intellectual and spiritual horizons. If you have young children on spring break, you may be surprised by how much you enjoy their company.



CANCER

This is an excellent week to apply for a loan or renegotiate your mortgage. At the very least, you'll find a solution to all your financial problems without tightening your purse strings.



LEO

At work, you'll have a record number of clients. Fortunately, each one will be more profitable than the last. If you're single, you'll find your soulmate at an event you attend with your friends.



VIRGO

Take time to think about your current projects. Make sure you negotiate terms that benefit you, and double-check the fine print. If you're in a relationship, don't underestimate the power of small acts of kindness.



LIBRA

Planning a move takes a lot of forethought. Consequently, you'll need to do a considerable amount of legwork to get things done. You'll be proud of the steps you take to improve your living situation.



SCORPIO

The most important thing in life is your health. You may try a new diet that will transform your quality of life and fill you with pride. Your perseverance and commitment will pay off.



SAGITTARIUS

Others may be critical of you. Now is the time to confront them. It's important to speak your mind and talk openly about what others may be too scared to admit.



CAPRICORN

You'll finally receive the money you've been waiting for in the form of a refund or claim. If you're in a relationship, your significant other will make you wait.



AQUARIUS

Don't make rash decisions, especially when it comes to money and relationships. You're on the verge of a new beginning, but many things are holding you back. You must learn to keep up.



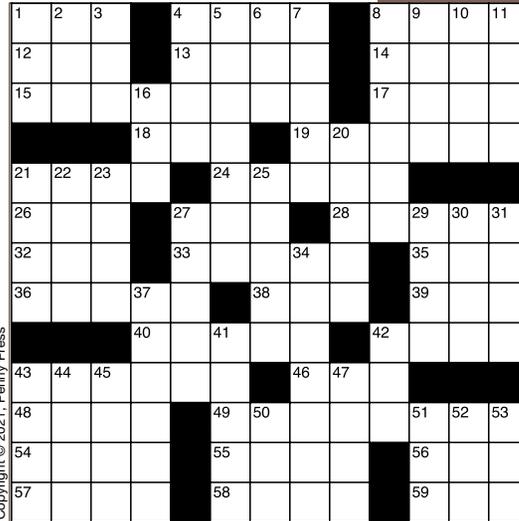
PISCES

You may be questioning yourself. Does your job feel stagnant? Is it time for a change? Now is the time to make room for more happiness in your life.

Coffee Break

CROSSWORDS

PUZZLE NO. 114



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ACROSS

- Talk
- Swindle
- Senseless
- Wool provider
- Bagel feature
- Eyeball
- Inhibited
- Verb's counterpart
- That girl
- Pictures
- "___ Madonna"
- Neck scarf
- Mine and yours
- Winter illness
- Cut apart
- Feasted
- Snaky letters
- Eden inhabitant
- Fastening peg
- Fodder
- Feel distress
- Robert ___ Stevenson

DOWN

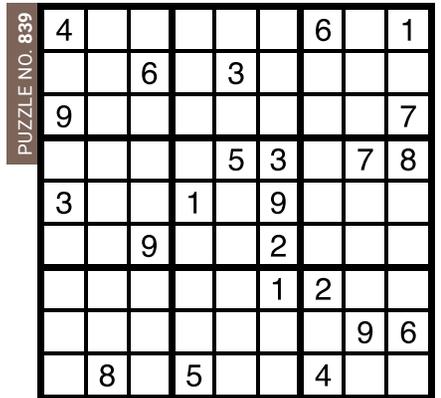
- ___ room
- Wonderment
- Sty
- Nursery-rhyme home
- Rounds up
- Stout
- First-aid provider
- Contribute
- Very eager
- Chimney part
- Perfect scores
- Reserved
- Like a tree-trunk growth
- Burden
- Motorcar
- Doodled
- Fish delicacy
- Through
- Criminal
- Meat choice
- Diabolic
- Count (on)
- Least difficult
- Secret groom
- Spending
- Picnic pest
- Sour
- Stance
- Part
- Dollars
- Stag's mate
- Trailing vine
- Knot
- Shrill bark

Sudoku

HOW TO PLAY:

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column, and every 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 through 9 only once.

Each 3x3 box is outlined with a darker line. You already have a few numbers to get you started. Remember: **You must not repeat the numbers 1 through 9 in the same line, column, or 3x3 box.**

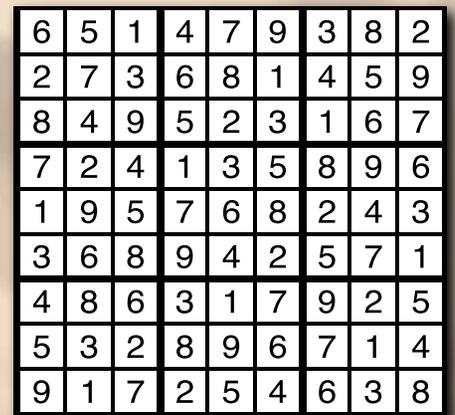


Last Issues' Answers

CROSSWORDS



Sudoku



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